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DRAFT BRIEFING NOTES 18 February 1963

CUBAN SUBVERSION IN LATIN AMERICA

I. Introductory Statement

The public pronouncements of Cuban leaders, the daily record of events in Latin America, and reports from our intelligence sources within Communist and other left-extremist elements throughout this hemisphere all agree on one salient conclusion: that Fidel Castro is encouraging and supporting the efforts of Communists to overthrow and seize control of the governments in Latin America.

A. Analysis indicates that the immediate threat stems less from the subversive efforts of traditional Communist movements than from Cuban support of any and all active revolutionary and terrorist movements.

B. These distinctions are not precise. In some countries, Castro's original success has spurred the established Communist movement to action, and he supports it. In others, the old-time Communists may even oppose radical action at this time, and Castro works with more active and more militant revolutionists.

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C. In any event, we know of only two countries--Mexico and Uruguay--where Castro appears inclined for the time being to forego inciting violence, and this only because he wants a favorable climate for his operations into other countries.

II. Even before the October missile crisis--and with increasing rancor since then--Cuban leaders have been exhorting revolutionary movements to violence and terrorism, and supporting their activities.

A. Cuban support takes many different forms. We have occasional evidence of direct participation by Cuban nationals, as in the La Oroya disorders in Peru in December. We know that some funds move, generally in cash by courier, from Cuba to the revolutionaries in other countries. While we have not been able to come up with the kind of airtight proof a court would require that weapons move directly from Cuba to these same groups, we do know that Cuba furnishes money to buy weapons, and that some guerrilla forces in Peru, for instance, are equipped with Czech weapons which most logically would come from Cuba.

B. But by and large, our evidence shows that Cuba is not now attempting a large program of physical support for Latin American revolutionaries. It is, rather, concentrating on supplying the inspiration, the guidance, the training, and the communications and technical assistance they require.

C. In essence, Castro tells would-be revolutionaries from other Latin American countries: "Come to Cuba; we will pay your way, we will train you in underground organization techniques, in guerrilla warfare, in sabotage and in terrorism. We will see to it that you get back to your homeland. Once you are there, we will keep in touch with you, give you propaganda support, send you propaganda materials for your movement, training aids to expand your guerrilla forces, secret communications methods, and perhaps funds and specialized demolition equipment." Castro is not, as far as we know, promising these other Latin Americans any Cuban weapons or Cuban personnel--either leaders, advisers, or cadres. But he probably does tell them: "If you succeed in establishing

something effective by way of a revolutionary movement in your homeland, if your guerrillas come down out of the hills and confront regular armed forces, then we may consider more concrete forms of assistance."

D. So far, it should be noted, none of the movements in South America has reached this final stage--and in fact even Castro's Sierra Maestra guerrillas never had to fight a pitched battle with regular military formations which might have required more advanced weapons than small arms, grenades, mines, and machineguns. In many ways, Cuba under Castro is the Latin version of the old Comintern, inciting, abetting, and sustaining revolution wherever it will flourish.

III. Before going into more detailed evidence of Cuban subversion in Latin America, I should note that Venezuela is apparently number one on Cuba's priority list for revolution.

A. Fidel Castro said so to the recent meeting of Communist front organizations for Latin American women.

1. Che Guevara and Blas Roca both emphasized the outlook for revolution in Venezuela in speeches in January.

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2. One of our established sources of proven reliability, high in the ranks of the Venezuelan Communist Party ((a veteran party member and leader of the FALN)), says the Central Committee agreed in January that a "peaceful solution to the present situation in Venezuela is out of the question."

B. This same source reported that Communist guerrilla and terrorist operations in Venezuela were placed under a unified command in late 1962, which coordinates activities with the other militant extremist group in Venezuela, the MIR. The result has been the creation of the FALN, or Armed Forces of National Liberation.

1. The FALN is currently trying to publicize its existence by such acts as the hijacking of the freighter ANZOATEGUI, and by acts of sabotage and indiscriminate shootings. These have also been designed to dissuade President Betancourt from his trip to Washington.

2. I do not wish to minimize the violence in Venezuela. The sabotage is the work of

experts, and is being done with advanced types of explosives. The shooting has reached the point in Caracas where it is not safe to go out after ten at night in some sections of the capital. But it is the opinion of both our people and the embassy that this is not a threat to government control. It is one thing for a group of young men to race down a dark street firing a machinegun from a speeding car. It is quite a different matter to stand up to the armed forces, or seize and hold government buildings.

3. We believe that Cuba has given guerrilla training to more nationals from Venezuela than from any other country. I shall explain in more detail later how we arrive at our figures on guerrilla trainees. Our best estimate now is that more than 200 Venezuelans received such training in 1962.

   a. Many of these are engaged in terrorism in the cities, and others were rounded up and given long prison sentences when they committed themselves

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prematurely last spring in a countryside where the rural population strongly supports the Betancourt administration.

b. One of our best penetrations of the Communist Party in Venezuela tells us that at present the unified command has less than 150 guerrillas in the field, in widely separated groups of 15 to 25 men each.

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